SHOOTING.

A POEM.

By Mr. Pye, of Faringdon

SHOOTING,

A

POEM.

——— VOLANS LIQUIDIS IN NUBIBUS ARSIT,
SIGNAVITQUE VIAM FLAMMIS ——— ———.

VIRGIL.

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A POEM on the Art of Shooting, entitled Pteriplegia, was publiſhed ſome years ago by Mr. MARKLAND, but by no means of ſufficient merit to preclude future attempts of a ſimilar nature; though its having paſſed through ſeveral editions is a proof that the ſubject of it is generally intereſting.

The Epiſode of ATYS and ADRASTUS is taken from the firſt book of HERODOTUS; the Author hopes it will not be conſidered as an intention to rival the elegant Poem written by the preſent Laureat, on the ſame ſtory; to which, he conceives, it can bear no more compariſon, than a group of figures introduced to enliven a landſcape can to an hiſtorical picture.

SHOOTING,

A

POEM.

YE ſylvan muſes! as my ſtep invades
The deep receſſes of your hallow'd ſhades,
Say will ye bid your echoing caves prolong
The harſher cadence of your vot'ry's ſong?
Not anxious now to ſtrike the trembling wire,
Sweetly reſponſive to your vernal choir;

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Or from the treaſur'd ſtores of earth to bring
The fragrant produce of the roſeate ſpring :
Mine the rude taſk, while ſummer's fading ray
To yellow autumn yields the ſhort'ning day,
And all the variegated woods appear
Clad in the glories of the withering year,
With dogs and fiery weapons to profane
The peaceful ſabbath of your rural reign;
Your deſolated regions to explore
'Mid the wild tempeſt, and the ſeaſon frore;
Deſtruction on your feather'd race to pour,
And add new horrors to the wint'ry hour.

'Twas thine, immortal SOMERVILLE! to trace
The livelier raptures of the breathleſs chace,

O'er

O'er hills and dales to urge, with eager ſpeed,
The hound ſagacious, and the panting ſteed;
And guide the labors of the enthuſiaſt throng
With all the extatic energy of ſong.——
Severer care theſe calmer lays demand,
And fancy curb'd by ſage Inſtruction's hand;
Yet, for the muſe ſome ſcatter'd charms ſhall gleam
'Mid the rich chaos of this copious theme;
Yet, here ſhall Glory view, with generous aim,
The riſing elements of martial fame.
As from the chace BRITANNIA's youth ſhall learn
The docile ſteed with ready hand to turn;
O'er the rude crag his bounding ſteps to guide,
Or preſs his ardor down the mountain's ſide,

Till, ruſhing to the field with fierce delight,
She ſends forth other * LINDSEYS to the fight:
So ſhall the ſteady train, of careful eye,
Who wound th' aerial offspring as they fly,
Whoſe limbs unweary'd keep the conſtant way,
From morn's firſt opening dawn, till parting day,
Manly and firm, an unexhauſted race,
With hardy frames the ſhining phalanx grace;
With ſteps, by labor unſubdued, ſhall know
Inceſſant to purſue the fainting foe;
Shall, 'midſt the rocks and woods, with active toil
Hang o'er his march, and all his movements foil;

* This gallant Officer, who was killed in one of the deſcents on the coaſt of France, during the war before laſt, was very inſtrumental in firſt forming the Light Horſe of this country.

Their

Their cloſe platoons, with cool and certain aim,
Shall ſend deſtruction forth in vollied flame;
Or o'er the field diſpers'd, each ſhot they pour
Shall mark ſome hoſtile victim's fatal hour.

Of old, ere imitative mortals ſtrove
To mate the fiery bolts of thund'ring Jove,
Train'd by ſuperior care, the elaſtic yew,
With ſinewy arm, our Engliſh bowmen drew:
The warlike art exulting ALBION ſaw
Protected by the foſt'ring hand of law;
Attentive * ſenates watch'd, with anxious zeal,
This martial bulwark of the general weal;

* See 33. Hen. VIII ch. 9.

The rules they order'd, or the prize they gave,
Compel'd the ſlothful, and enflam'd the brave;
And oft her archer-ſons would trophies wear
From GALLIA's croſsbow won, and SCOTIA's ſpear.

Nor let the frown of literary pride,
Or falſe refinement's ſneer, my labors chide:
Not all are form'd with unremitting view
Pale ſtudy's reſtleſs labors to purſue;
Not all their hours are dull enough to waſte
In the void round of faſhionable taſte;
Nor can the gentle airings, which engage
The fainter wiſh of languor, and of age,
From his purſuits the ſanguine vot'ry draw
Of wealth, of joy, of wiſdom, or of law,

Till

Till ſlow diſeaſe demand the leach's care,

Sad ſubſtitute for exerciſe and air!

Th' impatient youth, whom manly vigor fires,

Ruddy with health, and ſtung by wild deſires;

By active ſports alone can ſoothe to reſt

The boiling fervors of his panting breaſt.

Nor ſhall BRITANNIA's patriots blame the cauſe,

To woods and fields her wealthier chiefs that draws.

Let GALLIA's ſons to rural ſcenes reſort

Only when exil'd from a partial court,

Whoſe deareſt hopes a Monarch's favour crown,

Rais'd by his ſmile, or blaſted by his frown;

But ALBION's free-er lords muſt try to gain

The unbiaſs'd ſuffrage of her ruſtic train.

And every tie that binds her nobler band,

With dearer love, to their paternal land,

Her yeomen ſhall behold with grateful eye,
A ſurer pledge of wealth and liberty.

Come then, ye hardy youths, who wiſh to ſave
By generous labor powers that nature gave!
Who fly from languor, huſh'd in dread repoſe
Beneath the leaves of ſloth's enchanting roſe,
Glad on the upland brow, or echoing vale,
To drink new vigor from the morning gale;—
Come! and the muſe ſhall ſhew you how to foil
By ſports of ſkill the tedious hours of toil;
The healthful leſſons of the field impart,
And careful teach the rudiments of art.

When the laſt ſun of Auguſt's fiery reign
Now bathes his radiant forehead in the main,

The panoply by ſportive heroes worn
Is ranged in order for the enſuing morn;
Forth from the ſummer guard of bolt and lock
Comes the thick guêtre, and the fuſtian frock;
With curious ſkill, the deathful tube is made
Clean as the firelock of the ſpruce parade:
Yet, let no poliſh of the ſportſman's gun
Flaſh like the ſoldier's weapon to the ſun,
Or the bright ſteel's refulgent glare preſume
To penetrate the peaceful foreſt's gloom;
But let it take the brown's more ſober hue,
Or the dark luſtre of the enamel'd blue.
Let the cloſe pouch the wadded tow contain,
The leaden pellets, and the nitrous grain;
And wiſely cautious, with preventive care,
Be the ſpare flint, and ready turnſcrew there;

While the ſlung net is open to receive
Each prize the labors of the day ſhall give.

Yet oft the experienc'd ſhooter will deride
This quaint exactneſs of faſtidious pride;
In ſome old coat that whilom charm'd the eye,
Till time had worn it into ſlovenry,
His duſky weapon, all by ruſt conceal'd,
Thro' rainy ſervice in the ſportive field,
He iſſues to the plain, ſecure to kill,
And founds his glory on ſuperior ſkill.

The night recedes, and mild AURORA now
Waves her gray banner on the eaſtern brow;
Light float the miſty vapours o'er the ſky,
And dim the blaze of PHOEBUS' gariſh eye;

The flitting breeze juſt ſtirs the ruſtling brake,
And curls the cryſtal ſurface of the lake;
Th' expectant ſportſmen, urg'd by anxious haſte,
Snatch the refreſhment of a ſhort repaſt,
Their weapons ſeize, their pointers call around,
And ſally forth impatient to the ground.

Here where the yellow wheat away is drawn,
And the thick ſtubble clothes the ruſſet lawn,
Begin the ſport.—Eager and unconfin'd
As when ſtern ÆOLUS unchains the wind,
The active pointer, from his thong unbound,
Impatient daſhes o'er the dewy ground,
With glowing eye, and undulating tail,
Ranges the field, and ſnuffs the tainted gale;

Yet, midſt his ardor, ſtill his maſter fears,
And the reſtraining whiſtle careful hears.
So when BRITANNIA's watchful navies ſweep,
In freedom's aweful cauſe, the hoſtile deep,
Tho' the brave warrior panting to engage,
And looſe on ENGLAND's foes his patriot rage,
The tempeſt's howling fury deems too ſlow
To fill his ſails, and waft him to the foe;
Yet, 'midſt the fiery conflict, if he ſpy
From the high maſt his leader's ſignal fly,
To the command obedience inſtant pays,
And martial order martial courage ſways.

See how exact they try the ſtubble o'er,
Quarter the field, and every turn explore;

Now ſudden wheel, and now attentive ſeize
The known advantage of th' oppoſing breeze.——
At once they ſtop!——yon' careful dog deſcries,
Where cloſe and near the lurking covey lies.
His caution mark, leſt even a breath betray
Th' impending danger to his timid prey;
In various attitudes around him ſtand,
Silent and motionleſs, the attending band.
So when the ſon of DANAE and JOVE,
Crown'd by gay conqueſt and ſucceſsful love,
Saw PHINEUS and his frantic rout invade
The feſtive rights by HYMEN ſacred made,
To the rude Bacchanals his arm outſpread
The horrid image of MEDUSA's head;
Soon as the locks their ſnaky curls diſcloſe,
A marble ſtiffneſs ſeiz'd his threat'ning foes;

Fix'd

Fix'd were the eyes that mark'd the javelin thrown,
And each ſtern warrior rear'd his lance in ſtone.

Now by the glowing cheek and heaving breaſt
Is expectation's ſanguine wiſh expreſs'd.—
Ah curb your headlong ardor! nor refuſe
Patient to hear the precepts of the Muſe.
Sooner ſhall noiſy heat in raſh diſpute
The reaſoning calm of placid ſenſe confute;
Sooner the headlong rout's miſguided rage
With the firm phalanx equal combat wage,
Than the warm youth, whom anxious hopes enflame,
Purſue the fleeting mark with ſteady aim.
By temp'rate thought your glowing paſſions cool,
And bow the ſwelling heart to reaſon's rule;

Elſe

Elſe when the whirring pinion, as it flies,
Alarms your ſtartled ear, and dazzled eyes,
Unguided by the cautious arm of care,
Your random bolts ſhall waſte their force in air.

They riſe!—they riſe!—Ah yet your fire reſtrain,
Till the 'maz'd birds ſecurer diſtance gain;
For, thrown too cloſe, the ſhots your hopes elude,
Wide of your aim, and innocent of blood;
But mark with careful eye their leſſening flight,
Your ready gun, obedient to your ſight,
And at the length where frequent trials ſhew
Your fatal weapon gives the ſureſt blow,
Draw quick!—yet ſteady care with quickneſs join,
Leſt the ſhock'd barrel deviate from the line;

So ſhall ſucceſs your ardent wiſhes pay,
And ſure deſtruction wait the flying prey.

As glory more than gain allures the brave
To dare the combat loud, and louder wave;
So the ambition of the ſportſman lies
More in the certain ſhot than bleeding prize.
While poachers, mindful of the feſtal hour,
Among the covey random ſlaughter pour;
And, as their numbers preſs the crimſon'd ground,
Regardleſs reck not of the ſecret wound,
Which borne away, the wretched victim's lie
'Mid ſilent ſhades to languiſh and to die.
O let your breaſt ſuch ſelfiſh views diſclaim,
And ſcorn the triumph of a caſual aim:

Not urg'd by rapine, but of honor proud,
One object ſingle from the ſcatt'ring croud;
So, when you ſee the deſtin'd quarry down,
Shall juſt applauſe your ſkilful labor crown.

If your ſtaunch dogs require no inſtant toil
To reſcue from their jaws the flutt'ring ſpoil,
Re-load your fatal piece, with prudent zeal,
While glows with recent flame the ſmoaking ſteel;
So the black grain ſhall kindling warmth acquire,
And take the flinty ſpark with readier fire;
Or if ſome ſcatter'd bird, that lay behind,
Sudden ſhould riſe, and fleet away on wind,
You check her rapid courſe, nor murm'ring ſtand,
Your empty weapon uſeleſs in your hand.

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Now ſome obſervant eye has mark'd their flight,
And ſeen diſpers'd the weary'd covey light;
Soon to the ſpot the ranging pointer drawn,
Explores with tender noſe the tainted lawn,
Where, to his nicer ſenſe, their fumes betray
The ſecret ambuſh of the fearful prey.
With cautious action now, and ſtealthful pace,
His careful ſteps purſue the running race;
Now fix'd he ſtands, now moves with doubtful tread,
Stop'd by their pauſe, or by their motion led,
Till, rooted by the ſhelt'ring hedge, his feet
Declare the trembling victim's laſt retreat.

But as, with beating breaſts, on either ſide
Th' impatient youths the pleaſing taſk divide,

And in the row between the lurking game
Lies hid from ſight, ah, careful be the aim!
Leſt, ſkreen'd and parted by the thorny mound,
The erring ſhots ſhould give a fatal wound,
And change the jocund ſportſman's verdant wreath
For fun'ral weeds, for mourning, tears, and death.

In LYDIAN plains, where rich PACTOLUS roll'd
Through groves of perfume, and o'er ſands of gold,
CROESUS, of ASIA's lords the proudeſt name,
Shar'd every gift of fortune, and of fame;
So wide his empire, and ſo vaſt his ſtore,
That av'rice and ambition aſk'd no more;
Tho' bleſt in theſe, the dearer bliſs he knows
With which a parent's happy boſom glows,

For not the faireſt image ever dreſs'd
In the fond wiſhes of a father's breaſt,
By flattery ſwell'd, could mate the virtuous praiſe
To ATYS' worth that truth unbiaſs'd pays.
At war's loud clarion if the nations bled,
Conqueſt his armies crown'd if ATYS led;
If the rude waves of civil diſcord broke,
Huſh'd was the riſing ſtorm if ATYS ſpoke;
His lenient voice bade loud rebellion ceaſe,
And charm'd contending factions into peace:
Nor leſs his care domeſtic knew to bring
Joy to his ſire, than ſafety to his king;
Nor was the patriot's glory priz'd above
The dearer charity of filial love.

While proſp'rous ſcenes the monarch's thoughts beguile,
Too little warn'd of Fortune's tranſient ſmile,
'Mid the dark moments of the boding night
A horrid viſion ſeem'd to meet his ſight,
With dying mien his ATYS ſtood confeſs'd,
Transfix'd by hoſtile ſteel his bleeding breaſt.—
Swift from his couch he ſtarts, while wild deſpair
Contracts his eyeballs, and uplifts his hair.
In vain the orient morn's reviving pow'r
Chaced the pale phantoms of the midnight hour;
The recollected ſcene his peace annoys,
Sinks in his heart, and poiſons all his joys;
Around him viſionary falchions gleam
In act to realize his dreadful dream;
And if by chance loud rumour wafts from far
Uncertain clamours of intended war,

His lab'ring breaſt foretells the fatal deed,

And ſees in fancied fights his ATYS bleed.

What ſhall his fears invent, or how controul

The generous ardor of the hero's ſoul ?——

His mind to gentler thoughts he tries to move,

And conquer ſtrong renown by ſtronger love

The faireſt maid of LYDIA's glowing dames,

Whoſe beauteous form the manly youth enflames,

With eaſtern roſes crown'd, is bluſhing led

In Hymeneal pomp, to ATYS' bed.

To cares of empire, and to toils of fight,

Succeed the feſtal day, and genial night;

Soft Pleaſure ſpreads around her blooming flow'rs,

And wanton CUPID leads the laughing hours.

Amid theſe joys, from MYSIA's ſubject plain,
Before the throne, behold a ſuppliant train!
" O mighty prince!" they cry, " we now repair
" To claim the aid of thy paternal care;
" A ſavage monſter of portentous ſize,
" Whoſe cruel ſtrength our utmoſt force defies,
" Ranges our fields, ſpreads devaſtation round,
" And roots th' unripen'd harveſt from the ground.
" O, let thy youths, to range the woods who know,
" Attend with faithful dogs, and twanging bow;
" In his dire haunts the fierce invader brave,
" Repel his fury, and thy ſubjects ſave.
" Perhaps the prince".....The eager monarch, here,
Urg'd by the influence of parental fear,
Arreſts their ſpeech: " My arms, my youths ſhall go,
" Your terrors quell, and check this ſavage foe;

" But for my ſon, him other cares employ,

" And the ſoft ſcenes of Hymeneal joy,

" Nor muſt the rugged chace, or dubious fight,

" Mar the ſweet tranſports of the nuptial rite."

He ceas'd ; attentive round the MYSIAN band,
Pleas'd with the promis'd aid, ſubmiſſive ſtand.
Not ſo the prince, his ardent boſom glows
To burſt the ſilken bands of ſtill repoſe.

" Ah ! what, my ſire," he cries, " has ATYS done ?

" What ſad diſtruſt awaits your hapleſs ſon,

" That thus immers'd in ſloth you keep him far

" From fields of glory, and from toils of war ?

" For love's ſoft raptures though the hero burn,

" Yet fame and danger claim their wonted turn.

How

" How ſhall I meet, involv'd in this diſgrace,
" The indignant murmurs of your warrior race?
" How will, with tears of ſilent ſcorn, my bride
" Her alter'd lord's inglorious ſafety chide!
" O give my wiſhes way, or let me hear
" The hidden ſource of this injurious fear."

This earneſt prayer the ſmother'd ſecret draws,
And the ſad Monarch owns the latent cauſe:
When ATYS, ſmiling:—" How ſhall I reprove
" The fond exceſſes of paternal love,
" Tho' for my undeſerving life is ſhown
" A nice regard you never paid your own?
" But ſhall the heir of CROESUS' martial name
" Inglorious life prefer to glorious fame?——

" Life is a bliſs, when crown'd by virtue's meed,
" And death a prize, when honor bids us bleed;
" Omens and dreams in vain the purpoſe ſtay
" When duty calls, and glory points the way.
" Or grant ſome god the viſion ſent, yet here
" Vain are your cares, and uſeleſs is your fear;
" Tranfix'd by ſteel my bleeding breaſt you ſaw,
" Not torn and mangled by a beſtial jaw;
" Then let me go, and when you meet your ſon
" Clad in the ſhaggy ſpoils his arms have won,
" The ſhadowy phantoms of the night ſhall ceaſe
" To haunt your ſlumbers, and diſturb your peace."

The Monarch hears, and with reluctant eyes
Gives the conſent his boding heart denies;

His

His brow a placid guiſe diſſembling wears,

While reaſon vainly combats ſtronger fears.

It chanc'd a youth of PHRYGIA's royal train,

His hand polluted by a brother ſlain,

Exil'd by vengeance from his native ground,

In CROESUS' peaceful court a refuge found;

Where oft would ATYS' gentler care impart

The balm of friendſhip to his wounded heart;

To him the wretched king in ſecret ſpoke,

While tears and ſighs his faltering accents choke;

" If, brave ADRASTUS, thy oppreſſive woes

" In SARDIS' ſheltering walls have found repoſe,

" If here the expiating rite renew'd

" Has paid the forfeit for fraternal blood,

" If pity's tear, if friendſhip's lenient balm
" Have tried with ſtudious zeal thy griefs to calm,
" Go with my ſon, and by attentive care
" Partake his labors, and his dangers ſhare.
" Shield him from peril that my ſoul alarms,
" And bring him back in ſafety to my arms."

To whom the youth: " Oft has my ready breaſt
" Panted to aſk the office you requeſt,
" As oft my conſcious ſhame that wiſh reſtrain'd,
" Diſgrac'd by exile, and by murder ſtain'd:
" Since you command, your ATYS I'll attend,
" Obey my patron, and protect my friend;
" Watch o'er his ſafety in the doubtful ſtrife,
" Or ranſom with my own his dearer life."

Now to the Myſian fields elate and gay
The eager warriors bend their jocund way,
The echoing hills and foreſt walks reſound
With ſhouts of men, and chidings of the hound.
Rous'd from his lair, and iſſuing on the plain,
Forth burſts the monſter on the hunter train,
Around the circling youths impatient ſtand,
And launch their ſteely darts with ready hand.
Too raſhly eager as the PHRYGIAN threw,
With erring aim the pointed jav'lin flew,
In ATYS' breaſt the quiv'ring weapon ſtood,
And drank with fatal barbs his vital blood.—
The mournful ſhrieks that rent the ambient air,
The weeping troops, ADRASTUS' loud deſpair;
The ſilent agony, the guſhing tide
Of the ſad parent, and the widow'd bride,

The plaints they utter, and the woes they feel,
No heart can image, and no tongue reveal.
As the ill-fated youth is borne along,
All pale and bleeding, thro' the groaning throng,
By the cold corſe ADRASTUS frantic cries,
Death in his voice, and horror in his eyes;
" Why have the gods in partial vengeance ſhed
" Their choiceſt curſes on my wretched head?
" Fated the keeneſt ſtrokes of wrath to prove,
" And doom'd to murder thoſe whom moſt I love!
" O much wrong'd ſire, let thy avenging hand
" Expiate by guilty blood this weeping land:
" Be on my heart thy inſtant fury hurl'd,
" And ſave from future paricide the world!

" Alas

" Alas, my ſon!" the wretched King replied,

" 'Tis aweful JOVE who thus corrects my pride,

" Which, crown'd by conqueſt, and with power elate,

" Its fortune deem'd beyond the reach of fate.

" Alas! too late repentant, now I find

" The fleeting happineſs of human kind!

" With unexpected ſhock, this cruel blow

" Has laid at once my vain ambition low;

" The offended gods this chaſtiſement have given,

" Thou but the fatal inſtrument of heaven."

Silent the youth withdrew, till ſad were paid

The tributary rites to ATYS' ſhade:

Then, as chill midnight's dreary hours return,

Weeping he ſought the monumental urn:—

" ATYS!',

" ATYS !" he cried, " behold ADRASTUS come
" A willing victim to thy hallow'd tomb !—
" This erring hand, the fatal ſtroke that gave,
" Shall lay thy murderer breathleſs on thy grave."
Then pierc'd with ſudden arm his ſtruggling breaſt,
And on the blood-ſtain'd marble ſunk to reſt.

As more obliquely on autumnal ſkies
With milder force October's ſuns ariſe,
The purple pheaſant tempts the youth to rove
With well train'd ſpaniels thro' the faded grove.
See how with emulative zeal they ſtrive,
Thrid the looſe ſedge, and thro' the thicket drive !
Not ranging lawleſs o'er the foreſt wide,
But cloſe attendant on their maſter's ſide ;

No babbling voice the boſom falſely warms,
Or ſwells the panting heart with vain alarms,
Till all at once their choral tongues proclaim
The ſecret refuge of the lurking game;
Loud on the breeze the chearful clamour floats,
And the high wood re-echoes with the notes.
Swift is their courſe, no lengthen'd warnings now
Space to collect the ſcatter'd thoughts allow,
No wary pointer ſhews the cautious eyes
Where from his ruſſet couch the bird ſhall riſe:
Perhaps light running o'er the moſſy ground,
His devious ſteps your ſanguine hopes confound;
Or, by the tangled branches hid from ſight,
Sudden he wings his unexpected flight.
No open view along the uncumber'd field
To the cool aim will time and diſtance yield;

But the nice circumſtance will oft demand
The quickeſt eyeſight, and the readieſt hand,
Swift as he riſes from the thorny brake,
With inſtant glance the fleeting mark to take,
And with prompt arm the tranſient moment ſeize,
'Mid the dim gloom of intervening trees.
His gaudy plumage when the male diſplays
In bright luxuriance to the ſolar rays,
Arreſt with haſty ſhot his whirring ſpeed,
And ſee unblamed the ſhining victim bleed ;
But when the hen to thy diſcerning view
Her ſober pinion ſpreads of duſkier hue,
The attendant keeper's prudent warning hear,
And ſpare the offspring of the future year,
Elſe ſhall the fine which cuſtom laid of old
Avenge her ſlaughter by thy forfeit gold.

Soon as the ready dogs their quarry ſpring,
And ſwift he ſpreads his variegated wing,
Ceaſed is their cry, with ſilent look they wait
Till the loud gun decides the event of fate;
Nor, if the ſhots are thrown with erring aim,
And proudly ſoars away the unwounded game,
Will the ſtaunch train purſue him as he flies
With uſeleſs ſpeed, and unavailing cries.

And now when cloudy ſkies and drizzly rains
Swell the full ſprings, and drench the moiſten'd plains,
The extended ſpace of land and ocean croſs'd
From the bleak ſcenes of Hyperborean froſt,
With active wing the unwearied Woodcocks fly
To ſouthern climates, and a milder ſky,

The ozier'd borders of the brook explore,
And with deep bills the foreſt marſhes bore.
Where now matured yon ſlender aſhes ſtand,
Riſe from their ſtools and tempt the woodman's hand,
Where the looſe trunks admit the partial ray
Along the border take your cautious way.
Here let your care the ſhorten'd gun employ,
Leſt the thick boughs the purpoſed aim annoy;
Let ſuper-added ſteel with preſſure ſure,
From the dank drip the ſhelter'd pan ſecure:
And as the ſilent bird the ſtems among
Wheels ſlow his deſultory flight along,
With ſteady eye his wavering motion watch,
And thro' the parting trees the advantage catch;
Tho' diſtant be the ſhot, the ſlighteſt wound
Shall lay the fluttering victim on the ground.

Rouſed by the ſpaniel, 'midſt the foreſt ſhade,
Behold the trembling Leveret croſs the glade!
If round the extended plains yield ample ſpace,
Or for the rapid courſe, or chearful chace,
O, ſacred be her ſteps! nor let thy hand
Blaſt the fair hopes of a congenial band,
Or for a tranſient pleaſure meanly foil
The lengthen'd tranſport of the hunter's toil;
But where ſteep hills and ſpacious woodlands riſe,
Or the long flight the frequent copſe denies,
Blameleſs arreſt her rapid flight, nor ſpare
The timid victim for the inglorious ſnare.

Where ſhining rills with copious moiſture feed
The deeper verdure of the irriguous mead,

Or where between the purple heaths is ſeen
The moſſy boſom of the low ravine,
The fearful Snipes, hid from the ſearching eye,
'Mid the dank ſedge and nodding ruſhes lie.
With ſudden turns oblique, when firſt they riſe,
As from the weaver's arm the ſhuttle flies
They ſhape their wavering courſe; but patient ſtay
Till, with ſecurer wing, they ſoar away;
Then as aloft their outſtretch'd pinions ſail,
Borne on the boſom of the buoyant gale;
The fatal ſhot ſent forth with cautious ſight,
Shall bring them wheeling from their towering height.

When winter now, a gloomy tyrant, reigns
In dreadful ſilence o'er the ravaged plains,

Involves

Involves in ſheets of ſnow the bending woods,
And throws his icy mantle o'er the floods,
Cloſe by the harden'd brook, whoſe ſullen ſtream
No more ſoft murmuring aids the poet's dream,
Where, 'midſt the matted ſedge, the emerging flood
With air and life renews the finny brood,
The patient fowler ſtands with ſilent aim
To watch the ſtation of the watery game:
Not like the gentle angler, careleſs laid
In the cool ſhelter of the ſummer ſhade,
But train'd with hardy ſinews to defy
The chilling keenneſs of a wintery ſky;
While here the aquatic Wild-fowl's timid race
With wonted pinion ſeek the well known place;
Where ruſhes thick the Widgeon's haunt conceal,
The blue-winged Mallard, and the tenderer Teal;

Swift on the various race, in fiery ſhower,
The ſcattering ſhots unſeen deſtruction pour,
With mingled ſlaughter ſtrew the froſt-bound flood,
And dye the ſullied ſnow with guſhing blood.

Such are the ſports that fertile ALBION yields,
Such the wing'd inmates of her milder fields;
But bounteous Nature, with diffuſive hand,
Spreads wide her various produce o'er the land,
Each different region marks with nurturing care,
And bids a race congenial flouriſh there.
A tribe peculiar by her power is plac'd
On the drear mountain, and the howling waſte,
Which art and induſtry would rear in vain,
Or in the ſheltered vale, or cultured plain.

Hence

Hence wandering far from ENGLAND's gentler ſcene,
Her ſpacious champains, and her paſtures green,
The hardy youth will CAMBRIA's cliffs explore,
Or climb the heights of CALEDONIA hoar,
The Grouſe and ſable Heath-cock to purſue
Where moors unbounded tire the ſated view,
While noontide ſilence reigns, ſave where the tide
Pours in ſwoln torrents from the mountain's ſide;
And ſummer ſuns in full effulgence ſhed
Their burning fervors on the throbbing head.

Thus has my verſe in humble ſtrains reveal'd
The various pleaſures of the ſportive field,
And ſhewn the different labors of the day
As the revolving ſeaſons roll away:

But vainly ſhall preceptive rules impart
A perfect knowledge of this manly art;
Practice alone can certain ſkill produce,
And theory confirm'd by conſtant uſe.
As well the ſtripling of the gay parade,
Proud of his ſilken ſaſh and ſmart cockade,
Tho' taught by wiſe inſtructors to explore
The martial depth of mathematic lore,
Might hope to drive VICTORIA's crimſon car
Triumphant o'er the bleeding ranks of war,
Ere the long march, the early toil, and late,
The frequent ſcenes of danger and of fate,
The fervor of the glowing breaſt allay,
Change ardor's blaze for valor's temperate ray,
And teach the mind, unruffled and ſerene,
To keep her powers 'midſt horrors wildeſt ſcene.

The hardy youth who pants with eager flame
To ſend his leaden bolts with certain aim,
Muſt ne'er with diſappointed hopes recoil
From cold and heat, from hunger and from toil,
Muſt climb the hill, muſt tread the marſhy glade,
Or force his paſſage thro' the oppoſing ſhade,
Muſt range untamed by SOL's meridian power,
And brave the force of winter's keeneſt hour,
Till induſtry and time their work have wrought,
And honor crown the ſkill that labor taught.

Yet ſome, theſe harſher rudiments to ſpare,
And equal art with eaſier toil to ſhare,
Or watch with careful aim and ready fight
The ſwallow wheeling in her ſummer flight,

Or on ſome lofty cliff, whoſe chalky ſteep
Hangs with rude brow impending o'er the deep,
Where gulls and ſcreaming ſea-mews haunt the rock,
Pour fire inceſſant on the mingled flock.
But vain their hopes—preſented to the eye
In ſuch diverſive lines the objects fly,
That the 'maz'd ſight unnumber'd marks purſues,
Uncertain where to aim, and which to chuſe;
Deciſion quick and calm, the ſhooter's boaſt,
By frequent change, is check'd, confus'd, and loſt,
And, guarded by irreſolute delay,
Untouch'd ſhall future coveys fleet away.

More hurtful ſtill to try with diſtant blow
To bring the percher from th' aerial bough.

How

How ſhall his thoughts the level that prepare
With all the caution of mechanic care,
Exact and ſteady as the ſage's eye
Thro' GALILEO's tube ſurveys the ſky,
With ready view the tranſient object ſeize
Swift as the motion of the rapid breeze,
Purſue the uncertain mark with ſwift addreſs,
And catch the fleeting moment of ſucceſs?

Ere yet the Muſe her lay preceptive end
Ye eager youths theſe friendly rules attend:
'Tis not enough, that cautious aim, and ſure,
From erring ſhots your brave compeers ſecure,
That prudence guard thoſe ills which erſt might flow
From the wing'd javelin, and the ſounding bow;

For on the gun unnumber'd dangers wait,
And various forms of unexpected fate.
Drawn thro' the thorny hedge, the uncertain lock
May give with ſudden ſpring, a deadly ſhock ;
Or the looſe ſpark the rapid flaſh may raiſe,
And wrap the ſulphurous duſt in inſtant blaze.

'Tis hence the military race prepare
The novice youth with ſuch aſſiduous care,
And teach him with punctilious art to wield
The weighty fire-lock in the embattled field.
Tho' ſome may deem the attention urg'd too far,
As the meer pomp and circumſtance of war ;
When cloſely wedged the firm battalions ſtand,
Rank preſs'd on rank, and band impelling band,

Did not faſtidious zeal with cautious plan
Define each act, and every motion ſcan,
Oft would the bullet 'mid the battles roar
The thirſty herbage die with friendly gore,
And oft the dangerous weapon's kindling breath
Change fields of exerciſe, to fields of death.

Behold yon' eager race who o'er the plain,
With ſtimulating heel and looſen'd reign,
Their panting courſers urge to leave behind
The rapid currents of the northern wind,
Tho', as with headlong rage they ruſh along,
Impending dangers ſeem to wait the throng;
Tho' accident with more apparent face
Seem to attend the ardor of the chace;

Yet,

Yet, 'midſt theſe calmer ſports, with ghaſtly mien
The pallid form of ſlaughter lurks unſeen;
And while the hunter checks his bold career
To pour on RUSSEL's tomb the ſorrowing tear,
The ſportive train who haunt the fatal glades
Where hoary CAMUS flows by GRANTA's ſhades,
Shall weep the unexpected blow that gave
Their much-loved COTTON to a timeleſs grave.

Lamented youth! when erſt on WARLEY's plains
We led in radiant arms our ruſtic ſwains,
What time BRITANNIA, friendleſs and forlorn,
Her ſhores expoſed, her naval trophies torn;
Bold in her native vigor dared oppoſe
Rebellious ſubjects, and combining foes;
In vain thy generous boſom burn'd to ſtand
The manly bulwark of an injured land,

Or nobly bleeding by the hoſtile ball,
In freedom's, and in ALBION's cauſe to fall;
Doom'd by relentleſs fate, to preſs the ground,
The unhappy victim of a caſual wound.

Votaries of rural joy! with mine while flow
Your kindred ſtreams of ſympathetic woe,
By ſalutary care, ah! learn to ſhun
The hidden dangers of the unguarded gun!
And, as in fields of pleaſure you acquire
The ſoldier's manly toil and ſteady fire,
His cautious uſe of arms attentive heed,
Careful by no inglorious wound to bleed,
Nor laviſh life, but in the ſacred cauſe
Of BRITAIN's injured rights, and violated laws.

THE END.

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